

January 2004

English Language Arts 30–1

Part B: Reading

Readings Booklet

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Time: 2½ hours. This examination was developed to be completed in 2½ hours; however, you may take an additional ½ hour to complete the examination.

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination mark. There are 10 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

This examination contains questions that refer to **more than one** reading selection. Read the texts and answer the questions *in the order that they appear* in the Readings Booklet and Questions Booklet.

Instructions

- You may **not** use a dictionary, bilingual dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.
- Be sure that you have an English Language Arts 30–1 Readings Booklet **and** an English Language Arts 30–1 Questions Booklet.

- I. Questions 1 to 8 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a personal essay.

from THE COUNTRY OF ILLUSION

Journal

May 17, Athabasca Glacier: I park the car, button up my coat and step out into snow falling on snow.

5 A white world, blue-shadowed, hushed. Above, a smear of more luminous whiteness where the sun might be. The low whine of wind off the barely visible glacier, its upper reaches lost in a haze of snow and ice fog. The season is officially spring, yet here that fact is still a month and a valley away.

10 We, on the other hand, have arrived too soon. Cars and busloads of us, all making an early pilgrimage to the ice. I pass an older couple sipping coffee on the steps of their motorhome. A young man with a baby in a carrier on his back. I take my place in the slow, meandering procession, across the footbridge and up the rising path to the terminus.¹ With a nod and smile for those who pass me on their way back down, their faces flushed and wind-bitten, their eyes glistening with tears. Faces that register both weather and dissatisfaction. I struggle over
15 the icy gravel of the path, lowering my head against the wind, raising it every now and again to keep my bearings. Reading the dates on the few stone recession markers that are not blanketed in snow. 1967. 1979. 1984. And ignoring, like everyone else, the posted signs that advise me to stay off the ice.

20 Eventually gravel disappears under snow and I realize I have climbed from the terminal moraine² onto the glacier itself.

Ahead of me is a group of Japanese tourists, five men in business suits and dress shoes, scrambling, slipping and laughing their way upward. I pass a family—a boy skipping on ahead, a smaller child riding piggyback on dad, mom bringing up the rear and calling above the wind: *I think we should turn back.* A
25 young couple huddled together on an outcrop of rock, sharing sips from a juice box. I squint into the falling snow and see the hazy shapes of the foolhardy few who have hiked far out onto the ice. One of the Japanese businessmen pans a video camera across the blank whiteness.

30 What are we doing here? What will the businessman see when he takes that tape home and plays it back for his family?

Some uncertain distance ahead I can make out a stretch of the glacier's slope which the wind has almost cleared of snow. The pale blue of ice suggests itself there, and it is to that possibility of revelation that most of us are heading,

Continued

¹terminus—end point

²terminal moraine—an accumulation of stone and other debris deposited at the edge of a glacier

intrigued, determined, but perhaps, bitten by the unrelenting wind and numbed by
35 a shrouded, featureless world, already disillusioned.

Moving through the flurrying stillness of falling snow, I wonder about the
desire to turn the world of substance into words. About the unforeseeable events
that create that desire or at least make one aware of its dormant presence. I
remember a moment, years ago, when instead of a slow and chosen ascent like this
40 one, I made a swift and unforeseen descent.

This is the field the Canadian writer walks onto, with no stick to prod
for snow pockets, no gauge for the solidity of the earth. The open field
of snow, the page, the white space of the Canadian voice, whatever
that is.

45 —Aritha van Herk, "A Frozen Tongue/Crevasse"
in *A Frozen Tongue*

Memory

One Saturday in late winter, two of my high-school friends invited me to go ice-
scrambling with them in Maligne Canyon. Or I may have talked them into letting
50 me come along. I'm no longer certain on that particular point, but there is no
doubt that among many ignorances, I could claim a complete absence of
experience in ice-scrambling. My friends were not professional climbers, but
they had explored the canyon in winter before. They knew enough to bring rope,
as well as ice axes and crampons³ for themselves, and they were also thoughtful
55 enough to suggest that I take along a stick.

We headed upstream along the frozen floor of the canyon, but soon found
our way blocked by a towering icefall and so had to turn around and be content
with exploring the lower reaches. Despite my lack of appropriate gear, I
managed to keep up with my friends and consequently felt pleased with myself,
60 conveniently forgetting that we had so far avoided any of the canyon's real
difficulties. Then we reached a narrow spot where the gentle slope of snow and
ice we were inching down dropped at a suddenly precipitous angle and out of
sight around a curve in the canyon walls. Confronted by the unknown, we
stopped. There might be an icefall or, on a warm day like this, a pool of open
65 water just around the bend. My friends decided to go on ahead and explore,
leaving me to wait either for their return or for a signal that it was safe to
join them.

I resented being left behind. The three of us had worked as a team up to this
point, I thought, and I felt I'd earned the right to share in the adventure of
70 discovery. I crouched, leaning on my stick, and listened impatiently as the voices
of my friends gradually receded. Finally I called out, "Is it safe to come down?"

I thought I heard a muffled *yeah*, although my friends later denied they'd

³crampons—sets of spikes attached to shoes to prevent slipping when walking on ice or climbing

replied to, or even heard, my shouted question. I stood up. I set aside the stick because at the entrance to the curve, the canyon walls were narrow enough that
75 with arms outspread I could brace myself against them. Somehow I imagined this would be enough to keep me from falling, and so I stepped eagerly forward.

I like to think now that it was during those next few frozen seconds, as I lost my footing, crashed down and slid around the curve, that I entered the country of illusion. There was the brief image of my friends turning in shock as I shot
80 toward them. A gloved hand reaching out to grab me and only giving me a clout on the nose as I swept helplessly past. And then the slope ended and I soared off the edge into the unknown.

Some years later, I wrote a short story about that lesson in the unforgiving character of mountain landscape. I tried to capture in words the moment before I
85 went over the edge, and what happened afterwards, because I could not remember the fall itself. As it turned out, beyond the edge of the ice slope was a mere ten- or twelve-foot drop to a lower and more level section of the canyon. In the story, I described how I landed and sat there, stunned, as my mind tried to catch up with what had happened to the rest of me. My only injuries were a bruised backside
90 and a bloody nose from my friend's attempt to catch hold of me. The story ended with something that happened after the fall: I looked up and saw the contrail of a jet cross the narrow strip of blue sky between the dark canyon walls. I suppose, with an epiphany like that, I had decided this mishap could be read as the myth of Icarus.⁴

I was never happy with that story. And now, wondering about the events that brought me to writing, I see that it was the instant before the fall that really mattered. That was the scene that I would replay over and over again in memory. Entertaining other possibilities of its ending. Wondering how I could have been so uncharacteristically reckless. Somehow I had been tricked, or more likely I
100 had tricked myself, and the rest was left up to the capricious recalcitrance⁵ of ice. At that moment, sliding toward the edge, watching the unknowable future rush ineluctably⁶ toward me, I knew that there was no way out of this story, however it might end. At that moment, perhaps, began my obsession with narrative. And with landscape.

105 **Journal**

May 30, Mt. Edith Cavell. Today the sun is fierce in a cloudless sky. Climbing

Continued

⁴Icarus—in Greek mythology, Icarus and his father, Daedalus, escaped imprisonment in a labyrinth by using wings that Daedalus constructed. Despite his father's warning that flying too close to the sun would melt the wax holding his wings together, Icarus flew too close to the sun. The wax melted, and he fell into the sea and drowned.

⁵capricious recalcitrance—unpredictable stubbornness

⁶ineluctably—inevitably

the path alongside the wall of the lateral moraine, I hear the trickle and clunk of meltwater gently nudging the stones.

I move in and out of the range of sounds: an endless, intermittent
110 conversation going on among the elements. And I wonder what I think I'm doing here, an interloper who cannot understand the language.

A distant crash. I turn too late and glimpse only the tumbling fragments of the serac⁷ that has just detached itself from the foot of Angel Glacier.

As I descend toward the meltwater tarn⁸ at the base of Cavell, the tiny dark
115 specks I had glimpsed from high up on the path have become massive boulders. I climb a huge table rock near the shore of the tarn, sip steaming tea from a thermos and take out my notebook. Cloud shadows ghost across the valley floor.

As I write, I remember why I've come here, again.

Crack and rumble of an avalanche. I search Cavell's face. There. Smaller
120 than the sound led me to imagine. Powdery spume over a lip of rock. Dull succuss⁹ of thunder. Distance collapses in vertigo:¹⁰ it seems for a moment as if the avalanche might pour across the tarn and engulf me. I look and look until I am exhausted.

June 16, Sunwapta Lake near Athabasca Glacier:

125 Rock. Clay. Water. Flap of a page in the wind.

The difficulty: how to write about this landscape? How to write beyond the familiar words that obscure the world in a white-out of cliché? Rugged grandeur. Brooding majesty. Monarchs. Mountains as heads of an outmoded body politic.

Sometimes a mountain is too familiar to look at. Sometimes an entire
130 mountain is too insignificant for words.

Better to pick up one of the morainal fragments of rock at my feet. To describe the cool, pitted, secretive age of it in my palm. An immensity of time and pressure within its light heft. The play of surface: streaks and filaments of copper, nacre,¹¹ ebony. Delicate striations,¹² scratches. Tiny craters. Satellite of
135 the mountain.

Reading the surface of the rock, I know that I am reading a fragment of a larger story. I set the rock down in a different place from where I picked it up and turn a page in my notebook.

Thomas Wharton (1963-)

Wharton was born in Grande Prairie.

He has published two novels: *Icefields* and *Salamander*.

⁷serac—a large, pointed mass of ice in a glacier

⁸tarn—a small mountain lake

⁹succuss—shaking

¹⁰vertigo—dizzy heights

¹¹nacre—mother-of-pearl

¹²striations—lines on the surface of a rock

II. Questions 9 to 11 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poster.



Grün bricht durch!
FARBE BEKENNEN

This is a campaign poster for the Green Party, the German environmental political party that currently forms part of the German government.

The caption reads: Green breaks through! Show your colours.

Holger Matthies

III. Questions 12 to 21 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

This found poem is developed by using direct quotations from the Bible, political speeches, newspaper and magazine articles, and books.

BLESSED IS THE MAN

who does not sit in the seat of the scoffer—
the man who does not denigrate, depreciate, denunciate;
who is not “characteristically intemperate,”
5 who does not “excuse, retreat, equivocate; and will be heard.”

(Ah, Giorgione!¹ there are those who mongrelize
and those who heighten anything they touch; although it
may well be
that if Giorgione’s self-portrait were not said to be he,
10 it might not take my fancy. Blessed the geniuses who know
that egomania is not a duty.)
“Diversity, controversy; tolerance”—in that “citadel
of learning” we have a fort that ought to armor us well.
Blessed is the man who “takes the risk of a decision”—asks
15 himself the question: “Would it solve the problem?
Is it right as I see it? Is it in the best interests of all?”
Alas. Ulysses’ companions² are now political—
living self-indulgently until the moral sense is drowned,
having lost all power of comparison,
20 thinking license emancipates one, “slaves whom they
themselves have bound.”
Brazen authors, downright soiled and downright spoiled, as
if sound
and exceptional, are the old quasi-modish counterfeit,

¹Giorgione—15th-century Italian painter

²Ulysses’ companions—Ulysses’ shipwrecked companions were transformed into animals and chose to remain that way despite having the opportunity to be restored to human form

25 *mitin*-proofing³ conscience against character.
 Affronted by "private lies and public shame," blessed is the
 author
 who favors what the supercilious⁴ do *not* favor—
 who will not comply. Blessed, the unaccommodating man.
 30 Blessed the man whose faith is different
 from possessiveness—of a kind not framed by "things which
 do appear"⁵—
 who will not visualize defeat, too intent to cower;
 whose illumined eye has seen the shaft that gilds⁶ the sultan's
 35 tower.

Marianne Moore (1887–1972)
 American poet

³*mitin*-proofing—applying a protective coating

⁴supercilious—contemptuous, disdainful

⁵faith is . . . not framed by "things which do appear"—an allusion to the *Bible*, meaning that faith is not based on the concrete appearance of things

⁶gilds—covers with a layer of gold

IV. Questions 22 to 30 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a Shakespearean play. Question 34 requires you to consider this reading together with Reading V.

Shakespeare is believed to have written this play between the years 1593 and 1596, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

This excerpt is set in England in 1399, the last year of King Richard's reign. Shakespeare depicts Richard as a self-indulgent monarch whose chaotic reign has resulted in civil unrest. This excerpt takes place in a garden at the castle of the Duke of York.

CHARACTERS:

QUEEN—wife of King Richard

LADY—one of the Queen's ladies

GARDENER

[1.] MAN, [2.] MAN—Gardener's assistants

from THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD THE SECOND

Enter the Queen with [two Ladies,] her Attendants.

QUEEN: What sport shall we devise here in this garden

To drive away the heavy thought of care?

LADY: Madam, we'll play at bowls.

⁴bowls—lawn bowling

5 QUEEN: 'Twill make me think the world is full of rubs

⁵rubs—difficulties

And that my fortune runs against the bias.

⁶bias—tendency of a bowling ball to curve

LADY: Madam, we'll dance.

QUEEN: My legs can keep no measure in delight

When my poor heart no measure keeps in grief.

10 Therefore no dancing, girl; some other sport.

LADY: Madam, we'll tell tales.

QUEEN: Of sorrow or of joy?

LADY: Of either, madam.

QUEEN: Of neither, girl;

15 For if of joy, being altogether wanting,

It doth remember me the more of sorrow;

Or if of grief, being altogether had,

It adds more sorrow to my want of joy;

For what I have I need not to repeat,

20 And what I want it boots not to complain.

²⁰boots—helps

LADY: Madam, I'll sing.

- QUEEN: 'Tis well that thou hast cause;
But thou shouldst please me better, wouldst thou weep.
- LADY: I could weep, madam, would it do you good.
- 25 QUEEN: And I could sing, would weeping do me good,
And never borrow any tear of thee.
Enter Gardeners [one the Master, the other two his Men].
But stay, here come the gardeners.
Let's step into the shadow of these trees.
- 30 My wretchedness unto a row of pins,
They will talk of state, for every one doth so
Against a change: woe is forerun with woe.
[Queen and Ladies step aside.]
- GARDENER: Go bind thou up yon dangling apricocks,
35 Which, like unruly children, make their sire
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight.
Give some supportance to the bending twigs.
Go thou and, like an executioner,
Cut off the heads of too-fast-growing sprays
- 40 That look too lofty in our commonwealth.
All must be even in our government.
You thus employed, I will go root away
The noisome weeds which without profit suck
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.
- 45 [1.] MAN: Why should we, in the compass of a pale,
Keep law and form and due proportion,
Showing, as in a model, our firm estate,
When our sea-walled garden, the whole land,
Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up,
- 50 Her fruit trees all unpruned, her hedges ruined,
Her knots disordered, and her wholesome herbs
Swarming with caterpillars?
- GARDENER: Hold thy peace.
He that hath suffered this disordered spring
55 Hath now himself met with the fall of leaf.
The weeds which his broad-spreading leaves did
shelter,
That seemed in eating him to hold him up,
Are plucked up root and all by Bolingbroke—
60 I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Green.
- [2.] MAN: What, are they dead?

³⁰My wretchedness unto a row of pins—my misery against a triviality

³²Against—anticipating

³⁴apricocks—apricots

³⁶prodigal—excessive

⁴⁵a pale—a walled or enclosed garden

⁵¹knots—intricately patterned flowerbeds (refer to the photograph on page 11)

Continued

GARDENER: They are; and Bolingbroke
 Hath seized the wasteful king. O, what pity is it
 That he had not so trimmed and dressed his land
 65 As we this garden! We at time of year
 Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees,
 Lest, being overproud in sap and blood,
 With too much riches it confound itself.
 Had he done so to great and growing men,
 70 They might have lived to bear, and he to taste
 Their fruits of duty. Superfluous branches
 We lop away, that bearing boughs may live.
 Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,
 Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down.
 75 [2.] **MAN:** What, think you the king shall be deposed?
GARDENER: Depressed he is already, and deposed
 'Tis doubt he will be. Letters came last night
 To a dear friend of the good Duke of York's
 That tell black tidings.
 80 **QUEEN:** O, I am pressed to death through want of speaking!
[Comes forward.]
 Thou old Adam's likeness, set to dress this garden,
 How dares thy harsh rude tongue sound this displeasing
 news?
 85 What Eve, what serpent, has suggested thee
 To make a second fall of cursèd man?
 Why dost thou say King Richard is deposed?
 Dar'st thou, thou little better thing than earth,
 Divine his downfall? Say, where, when, and how
 90 Cam'st thou by this ill tidings? Speak, thou wretch!
GARDENER: Pardon me, madam. Little joy have I
 To breathe this news; yet what I say is true.
 King Richard, he is in the mighty hold
 Of Bolingbroke. Their fortunes both are weighed.
 95 In your lord's scale is nothing but himself,
 And some few vanities that make him light;
 But in the balance of great Bolingbroke,
 Besides himself, are all the English peers,
 And with that odds he weighs King Richard down.
 100 Post you to London, and you will find it so.
 I speak no more than every one doth know.
QUEEN: Nimble mischance, that art so light of foot,
 Doth not thy embassy belong to me,
 And am I last that knows it? O, thou thinkest

⁶²Bolingbroke—the Duke of Hereford; he was Richard's cousin who later became King Henry IV. Bolingbroke has just taken Richard to London.

⁶⁸confound—ruin

⁷⁶Depressed—lowered in degree or authority

⁷⁷'Tis doubt—it is feared

⁸²Adam's likeness—a reference to the biblical Adam, the first man

⁸⁵Eve—a reference to the biblical Eve, the first woman, Adam's wife

¹⁰³embassy—message

105 To serve me last, that I may longest keep
Thy sorrow in my breast. Come, ladies, go
To meet at London London's king in woe.
What, was I born to this, that my sad look
Should grace the triumph of great Bolingbroke?
110 Gard'ner, for telling me these news of woe,
Pray God the plants thou graft'st may never grow.

Exit [with Ladies].

GARDENER: Poor queen, so that thy state might be no worse,
I would my skill were subject to thy curse!
115 Here did she fall a tear; here in this place
I'll set a bank of rue, sour herb of grace.
Rue, even for ruth, here shortly shall be seen,
In the remembrance of a weeping queen.

¹¹⁷ruth—compassion

Exeunt.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)



Knott Garden in Stratford upon Avon, Shakespeare's home town

- V. Questions 31 to 33 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an essay. Question 34 requires you to consider this reading together with Reading IV.

This excerpt is taken from an essay written as an introduction to the play The Tragedy of King Richard the Second.

**from INTRODUCTION TO THE TRAGEDY OF
KING RICHARD THE SECOND**

It¹ came at a time when the aged Elizabeth I and her councillors were extremely sensitive to the possible political repercussions of stage plays. Consequently when it appeared in print in 1597 the actual dethronement (IV, i, 154–318) had been excised.² It had almost certainly been included in the stage performances
5 and may well have been banned by the censor of books for that very reason. It was not printed until 1608, when Elizabeth's successor, James I, was firmly seated on the English throne.

As for the queen's anxiety, the perspective of three and a half centuries makes clear that while, like every re-enactment of history, the play had political
10 meaning, it can have had no political purpose, and that, in supposing it could be useful as propaganda, both her majesty's government and the opposition were deceived. It is a vivid, impartial re-creation of a political impasse which brought death to a tyrant, but to a usurper a troublesome reign, and to the realm eventually some thirty years of civil war. It is full of conflicting political ideas: the divine
15 right of kings, the subject's duty of passive obedience, the dangers of irresponsible despotism, the complex qualities of an ideal ruler. But which of these ideas were Shakespeare's own is impossible to discern. On politics as on religion he preserves as always "the taciturnity of nature." What can be said of this aspect of *Richard II* is that here, as in all the histories, Shakespeare wrote as a
20 true patriot and that England was the heroine. The continuing power of the play to interest audiences in England and elsewhere can come only from its universal human appeal as drama.

Matthew W. Black
University of Pennsylvania

¹It—refers to the play *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second*

²excised—removed

VI. Questions 35 to 44 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a novel.

This is the opening chapter of the novel.

from FLESH AND BLOOD

1 9 3 5 / Constantine, eight years old, was working in his father's garden and thinking about his own garden, a square of powdered granite he had staked out and combed into rows at the top of his family's land. First he weeded his father's bean rows and then he crawled among the gnarls and snags of his father's vineyard, tying errant tendrils back to the stakes with rough brown cord that was to his mind the exact color and texture of righteous, doomed effort. When his father talked about "working ourselves to death to keep ourselves alive," Constantine imagined this cord, coarse and strong and drab, electric with stray hairs of its own, wrapping the world up into an awkward parcel that would not submit or stay tied, just as the grapevines kept working themselves loose and shooting out at ecstatic, skyward angles. It was one of his jobs to train the vines, and he had come to despise and respect them for their wild insistence. The vines had a secret, tangled life, a slumbering will, but it was he, Constantine, who would suffer if they weren't kept staked and orderly. His father had a merciless eye that could find one bad straw in ten bales of good intentions.

As he worked he thought of his garden, hidden away in the glare of the hilltop sun, three square feet so useless to his father's tightly bound future that they were given over as a toy to Constantine, the youngest. The earth in his garden was little more than a quarter inch of dust caught in a declivity of rock, but he would draw fruit from it by determination and work, the push of his own will. From his mother's kitchen he had spirited dozens of seeds, the odd ones that stuck to the knife or fell on the floor no matter how carefully she checked herself for the sin of waste. His garden lay high on a crown of scorched rock where no one bothered to go; if it produced he could tend the crop without telling anyone. He could wait until harvest time and descend triumphantly, carrying an eggplant or a pepper, perhaps a tomato. He could walk through the autumn dusk to the house where his mother would be laying out supper for his father and brothers. The light would be at his back, hammered¹ and golden. It would cut into the dimness of the kitchen as he threw open the door. His mother and father and brothers would look at him, the runt, of whom so little was expected. When he stood in the vineyard looking down at the world—the ruins of the Papandreous' farm, the Kalamata Company's olive groves, the remote shimmer of town—he thought of climbing the rocks one day to find green shoots pushing

¹hammered—shaped or marked by hammer blows

Continued

35 through his patch of dust. The priest counseled that miracles were the result of
diligence and blind faith. He was faithful.

And he was diligent. Every day he took his ration of water, drank half, and
sprinkled half over his seeds. That was easy, but he needed better soil as well.
The pants sewn by his mother had no pockets, and it would be impossible to steal
40 handfuls of dirt from his father's garden and climb with them past the goats' shed
and across the curving face of the rock without being detected. So he stole the
only way he could, by bending over every evening at the end of the workday, as if
tying down one last low vine, and filling his mouth with earth. The soil had a
heady, fecal taste; a darkness on his tongue that was at once revolting and
strangely, dangerously delicious. With his mouth full he made his way up the
45 steep yard to the rocks. There was not much risk, even if he passed his father or
one of his brothers. They were used to him not speaking. They believed he was
silent because his thoughts were simple. In fact, he kept quiet because he feared
mistakes. The world was made of mistakes, a thorny tangle, and no amount of
cord, however fastidiously tied, could bind them all down. Punishment waited
50 everywhere. It was wiser not to speak. Every evening he walked in his
customary silence past whatever brothers might still be at work among the goats,
holding his cheeks in so no one would guess his mouth was full. As he crossed
the yard and ascended the rocks he struggled not to swallow but inevitably he did,
and some of the dirt sifted down his throat, reinfesting him with its pungent black
55 taste. The dirt was threaded with goat dung, and his eyes watered. Still, by the
time he reached the top, there remained a fair-sized ball of wet earth to spit into
his palm. Quickly then, fearful that one of his brothers might have followed to
tease him, he worked the handful of soil into his miniature garden. It was
drenched with his saliva. He massaged it in and thought of his mother, who
60 forgot to look at him because her own life held too many troubles for her to
watch. He thought of her carrying food to his ravenous, shouting brothers. He
thought of how her face would look as he came through the door one harvest
evening. He would stand in the bent, dusty light before his surprised family.
Then he would walk up to the table and lay out what he'd brought: a pepper, an
65 eggplant, a tomato.

Michael Cunningham (1952–)

Cunningham is an American writer who
received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for *The Hours*.

He lives in New York City.

- VII. Questions 45 and 46 in your Questions Booklet are based on this photograph and commentary.

ONE THAT ALMOST GOT AWAY

Final Edit



PUERTO RICO

Why We Pulled the Taffeta¹

- Early one morning, deep in Puerto Rico's rural heartland, photographer Amy Toensing found a freshly washed harvest—of formal wear. "I was driving around Utuado and saw these little dresses hanging on a clothesline. I just had to stop the car," she remembers. "There was something about those colors that
- 5 really said 'Puerto Rico' to me."

But not to illustrations editor Susan Welchman. "Every photograph we use has to help tell the story about that particular place," she says. "This picture is beautiful, but it didn't do the job."

- The dreamlike image did do a job on several female staffers, however. "You
- 10 either had dresses like these when you were a girl, or wanted them," sighed one writer. "Not me," says Toensing, a child of the seventies. "I wore pants."

¹Taffeta—a crisp, woven fabric of silk, rayon, or nylon; often used to make girls' clothing

VIII. Questions 47 to 51 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an essay. Question 70 requires you to consider this reading together with Readings IX and X.

Sir William Schwenk Gilbert (1836–1911), an English playwright and humourist, is best known for his collaborations with Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1842–1900) in writing comic operettas. This excerpt is from the introduction to a complete collection of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas published in 1996.

**from INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPLETE ANNOTATED
GILBERT AND SULLIVAN**

On the morning after the opening night of *The Gondoliers* in December 1889 W. S. Gilbert wrote to Sir Arthur Sullivan thanking him for all the work that he had put into the piece. He added with rare magnanimity:¹ “It gives one the chance of shining right through the twentieth century with a reflected light.”

- 5 The works of Gilbert and Sullivan have, indeed, continued to shine right through the twentieth century. In fact, they are almost certainly more widely known and enjoyed as it draws to a close than they were in its early years. This is in large part due to modern technology which has made them available on records and compact discs, audio and video tapes, television, film and radio as well as
10 through the more traditional medium of stage performances by both amateur and professional companies.

- What are the reasons for the enduring popularity of the Savoy Operas?² Undoubtedly the nostalgia factor is an important one. At a time of shifting values and rapid change, roots and tradition have come to assume considerable
15 importance. The burgeoning heritage industry, which seems to be turning just about every other derelict industrial site into a working museum or theme park, testifies to the appeal of the past, and especially of the Victorian era which seems to stand for so much that we have lost in the way of reassuring solidity and self-confidence. The operas of Gilbert and Sullivan undoubtedly appeal to many
20 people today because they are a genuine piece of Victoriana, as authentic as William Morris wallpaper, the Albert Memorial or a Penny Black stamp.

Half the charm of the Savoy Operas is that they are so dated. They seem to breathe the innocence, the naïvety and the fun of a long-vanished age. Even

¹magnanimity—generosity and forgiveness

²Savoy Operas—operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan are often referred to as the Savoy Operas. In 1881, D'Oyly Carte, a successful producer of theatrical works, built the Savoy Theatre for the performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas.

25 when they were written, of course, they had a strong element of pure escapism
with their fantastic topsy-turvy³ settings and plots. Now, a hundred years on,
their mannered dialogue and topical references to themes and personalities that
have long passed into the realms of history give them an added quaintness as
period pieces.

30 There are those who feel that our strong attachment to the works of Gilbert
and Sullivan is part of the British disease of always looking backwards and never
looking forwards. In a letter to *The Times* in December 1990 Sir Graham Hills,
Principal of the University of Strathclyde and member of the Board of Governors
of the BBC, proposed, apparently in all seriousness, a moratorium⁴ for at least
five years on performances of the Savoy Operas. He wrote:

35 They engender in the British (and especially in the English)
nostalgic fondness for Britain's imperial past which is a serious
obstacle to change and reform. Everything associated with that
past, from lord chancellors and the like in fancy dress to light-
hearted, bone-headed military men in scarlet, gives credence to the
40 idea that great wealth flows effortlessly and unceasingly from such
cultivated minds. The facts are that our wealth-creating apparatus,
in the form of business and industry, continues to decline almost
monotonically, and has done so since those operas were first
performed.

45 There is clearly room for someone to do a doctoral thesis (perhaps under Sir
Graham's supervision?) on the relationship between Gilbert and Sullivan and
Britain's economic decline. Perhaps he does have a point, although he would
have to explain how the Savoy Operas have remained very popular in the United
States in a culture which is much more forward-looking and enterprise-friendly.
50 His call for a moratorium, I am relieved to say, has not been taken up and as far
as I am aware, no operatic group, either amateur or professional, has forsaken the
works of Gilbert and Sullivan as their contribution to helping Britain's economic
recovery.

Ian Bradley

Bradley is a clergyman, university lecturer,
writer, and broadcaster. He lives in Scotland.

³topsy-turvy—upside-down, confused

⁴moratorium—suspension of performance

IX. Questions 52 to 64 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a screenplay. Question 70 requires you to consider this reading together with Readings VIII and X.

GILBERT and SULLIVAN collaborated on 14 operettas between 1871 and 1896. These 14 operettas, still popular today, are the most frequently performed operettas in history. None of the work produced individually by either man remained popular beyond his own time.

This excerpt from a screenplay about the lives of GILBERT and SULLIVAN is set in London in 1885.

CHARACTERS:

SULLIVAN—Sir Arthur Sullivan, musical composer

CARTE—D'Oyly Carte, producer

GILBERT—W. S. Gilbert, writer of plays and lyrics

HELEN—Miss Helen Lenoir, stage manager

from TOPSY-TURVY

SULLIVAN is in his study, late at night. He is in his shirtsleeves, working at the desk—writing (like many composers, SULLIVAN didn't compose at the piano). He has a cigarette in its holder.

5 He writes a couple of bars, stops, crosses something out, and lets his pen drop on to the page. He holds his head in his hands. He lets his monocle drop. Near by, Big Ben strikes the quarter. He looks helpless. He is not happy.

In CARTE's office. Day. Footsteps. Until GILBERT and SULLIVAN sit, we see only a close shot of the desk: hands, cigars, etc.



Sullivan as depicted in the film *Topsy-Turvy*

- GILBERT: Good morning, Carte.
- 10 CARTE: Good morning, Gilbert. Cigar? (*He offers the cigar box.*)
- GILBERT: Thank you very much. (*He takes one.*)
- SULLIVAN: Gilbert.
- GILBERT: Sullivan. May I? (*He refers to CARTE's cigar-cutter.*)
- CARTE: Certainly.
- 15 SULLIVAN: Good morning, D'Oyly.
- CARTE: Hello, Arthur.
- GILBERT: Good morning, Miss Lenoir.
- HELEN: Good morning, everybody.
- SULLIVAN: Good day, Helen.
- 20 (*GILBERT and SULLIVAN sit, side by side. GILBERT lights his cigar. CARTE sits on the ottoman by the wall. HELEN sits in CARTE's chair behind his desk. CARTE gives her a discreet nod.*)
- HELEN: Now, gentlemen, we all know why we're here. We seem to have come to something of a standstill.



D'Oyly Carte and Helen Lenoir as depicted in the film *Topsy-Turvy*

- 25 SULLIVAN: Indeed we have.
- HELEN: Which, Arthur, is because . . . ?
- SULLIVAN: Oh. Because, Helen, I am unable to set the piece¹ that Gilbert persists in presenting.
- GILBERT: The piece I persist in presenting, Sullivan, is substantially altered each
- 30 time, otherwise there'd be little point in my presenting it to you.
(*SULLIVAN lights a cigarette.*)
- SULLIVAN: With great respect, old chap, it is not substantially altered at all. You

Continued

¹set the piece—compose music for the lyrics

seem merely to have grafted on to the first act the tantalizing suggestion
that we are to be in the realms of human emotion and probability, only to
35 disappoint us by reverting to your familiar world of topsy-turvydom.

GILBERT: That which I have grafted on to Act One, Sullivan, has been
specifically at your request. If you take exception to topsy-turvydom, you
take exception to a great deal of my work over the past twenty-five years.
40 Not to mention much of what you and I have written together since
eighteen hundred and seventy-one.

SULLIVAN: Oh, that is patent balderdash!

GILBERT: Is it?

HELEN: Gentlemen, if we might keep things cordial, we may make some
progress. Arthur, can you really not see your way to setting this new piece?

45 **SULLIVAN:** Alas, Helen, I cannot.

HELEN: Cannot, or will not?

SULLIVAN: I am truly unable to set any piece that is so profoundly uncongenial
to me.



Gilbert and Sullivan as portrayed in the film *Topsy-Turvy*

50 **HELEN:** Uncongenial though it may be to you, I must remind you that we here
are conducting a business.

SULLIVAN: And may I remind you, Helen, that I am not a machine.

HELEN: I would not suggest for one moment that you were.

SULLIVAN: You all seem to be treating me as a barrel-organ. You have but to
turn my handle, and 'Hey Presto!'—out pops a tune!

55 (GILBERT, CARTE and HELEN speak at once.)

GILBERT: That's not strictly true.

CARTE: Arthur!

HELEN: Come now, that's unfair. (*She continues.*) You are both contractually obliged to supply a new work on request.

60 GILBERT: And the very act of signing a joint contract dictates that we must be businesslike.

HELEN: Yes, Mr Gilbert, and I was wondering whether you might not be able to solve our wee difficulty.

GILBERT: How, pray?

65 HELEN: By simply writing another libretto.²
(SULLIVAN *looks worried.*)

GILBERT: That's out of the question. I have spent many long months working at this play, which I have every confidence will be the best we have yet produced at the Savoy, and to abandon it would be not only criminal, but

70 wasteful.

HELEN: I see.

GILBERT: Now, had Sullivan lodged his complaint at an earlier date, that might have been a different matter.

SULLIVAN: I made my complaint the moment you presented me with the

75 libretto.

GILBERT: The point being that I was unable to present you with the libretto until you returned from your Grand Tour of Europe.³

SULLIVAN: That is neither here nor there.

GILBERT: No, Sullivan—indeed! I was here, and you were there! Ha!

80 HELEN: What I don't understand, Arthur, is why you cannot set this piece. You're our greatest composer—surely you can do anything.

SULLIVAN: How very kind you are, Helen; but I say again to you all, I am at the end of my tether. I have been repeating myself in this . . . class of work for too long, and I will not continue so to do.

85 GILBERT: Neither of us runs any risk of repeating himself, Sullivan. This is an entirely new story, quite unlike any other.

SULLIVAN: But, Gilbert, it bears a marked similarity to *The Sorcerer*. People are already saying we're repeating ourselves.

GILBERT: In what way is it similar to *The Sorcerer*?

90 SULLIVAN: Obviously, both involve characters who are transformed by the taking of a magic potion. A device which I continue to find utterly contrived.

GILBERT: Every theatrical performance is a contrivance, by its very nature.

SULLIVAN: Yes, but this piece consists entirely of an artificial and implausible

95 situation.

Continued

²libretto—the text of a dramatic musical work, such as an opera

³Grand Tour of Europe—extended travel often undertaken by English gentlemen to gain experience and enlightenment

- GILBERT: If you wish to write a grand opera about a prostitute dying of consumption in a garret, I suggest you contact Mr Ibsen⁴ in Oslo. I am sure he will be able to furnish you with something suitably dull.
- CARTE: Gilbert—please.
- 100 GILBERT: Hmm? I do beg your pardon, Miss Lenoir.
- HELEN: Oh, no, granted.
- SULLIVAN: The opportunity to treat a situation of tender, human and dramatic interest is one I long for more than anything else in the world.
- 105 GILBERT: If that is your sincere desire, I would be willing, with Carte's permission, to withdraw my services for one turn, to allow you to write a grand opera with a collaborator with whom you have a closer affinity than myself.
- SULLIVAN: No, Gilbert.
- GILBERT: I am in earnest, Sullivan.
- 110 CARTE: No doubt that is something we shall be pursuing in the future.
- GILBERT: Indeed? Well, that is your prerogative, Carte.
- HELEN: However, we are concerned with the present. Arthur, will you or will you not set Mr Gilbert's new and original work?
- SULLIVAN: *Ma belle Hélène, ce n'est pas possible.*⁵
- 115 HELEN: Truly?
- SULLIVAN: I'm afraid so.
- HELEN: That being the case . . . Mr Gilbert: would I be right in supposing that you remain unable to accommodate us?
- GILBERT: Indeed, Miss Lenoir. I have had what I deem to be a good idea, and
- 120 such ideas are not three a penny.
- HELEN: What a pity. This will be a very sad day for many thousands of people. (CARTE takes out his pocket watch.)
- CARTE: Well, gentlemen . . . I don't know about you, but, speaking for myself, I could murder a pork chop.
- 125 (He snaps his watch shut. Very long pause.)
- GILBERT: If you'll excuse me, I shall retrieve my hat. (He gets up, and goes through to HELEN's office. She watches him. Then CARTE gets up, and stands by HELEN's chair. Pause. SULLIVAN hesitates, then he too gets up and goes towards HELEN's office. GILBERT is on his
- 130 way back. They meet in the doorway.)
- SULLIVAN: Gilbert.

⁴Mr Ibsen—Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906) a Norwegian playwright who introduced to the European stage a new order of moral analysis that was placed against a realistic middle-class background

⁵"*Ma belle Hélène, ce n'est pas possible*"—"My dear Helen, that is not possible."

GILBERT: Sullivan.
(*He puts on his hat, and addresses CARTE and HELEN.*)
Good day to you both. No doubt we shall be in communication in the
135 near future.
(*CARTE and HELEN speak at once.*)
CARTE: Gilbert.
HELEN: Good day, Mr Gilbert.
GILBERT: Good day.
140 (*He leaves the office. SULLIVAN returns from HELEN's office. He is
wearing his top hat. Pause.*)
SULLIVAN: You know where to find me.
HELEN: Arthur.
(*He leaves. Pause. HELEN sighs.*)

Mike Leigh (1943–)
Leigh was born in Lancashire, England.
He is an award-winning film maker who
received the Michael Balcom Award for
Outstanding Contribution to British Cinema in 1995.

- X. Questions 65 to 69 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an operetta. Question 70 requires you to consider this reading together with Readings VIII and IX.

The setting of this operetta written by Gilbert and accompanied by the music of Sullivan is a seashore in Cornwall, England.

CHARACTERS:

KING—the pirate king
RUTH—a pirate maid
ALL—the pirate crew
FRED—Frederic, a young pirate

from THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

SONG—PIRATE KING.

- KING: Oh, better far to live and die
Under the brave black flag I fly,
Than play a sanctimonious¹ part,
5 With a pirate head and a pirate heart.
Away to the cheating world go you,
Where pirates all are well-to-do;
But I'll be true to the song I sing,
And live and die a Pirate King.
10 For I am a Pirate King.
ALL: You are!
Hurrah for the Pirate King!
KING: And it is, it is a glorious thing
To be a Pirate King.
15 ALL: It is!
Hurrah for our Pirate King!
KING: When I sally forth to seek my prey
I help myself in a royal way:
I sink a few more ships, it's true,
20 Than a well-bred monarch ought to do;
But many a king on a first-class throne,
If he wants to call his crown his own,
Must manage somehow to get through
More dirty work than ever I do,
25 For I am a Pirate King.



Taken from cigarette cards; in the past, cigarette packages contained trading cards

¹sanctimonious—hypocritical or falsely righteous

ALL: You are!
Hurrah for the Pirate King!
KING: And it is, it is a glorious thing
To be a Pirate King!
30 ALL: It is!
Hurrah for our Pirate King!

(Exeunt all except FREDERIC.)

(Enter RUTH.)

RUTH: Oh, take me with you! I cannot live if I am left behind.
35 FRED: Ruth, I will be quite candid with you. You are very dear to me, as you
know, but I must be circumspect. You see, you are considerably older than I.
A lad of twenty-one usually looks for a wife of seventeen.
RUTH: A wife of seventeen! You will find me a wife of a thousand!
FRED: No, but I shall find you a wife of forty-seven, and that is quite enough.
40 Ruth, tell me candidly, and without reserve: compared with other women—
how are you?
RUTH: I will answer you truthfully, master—I have a slight cold, but otherwise I
am quite well.
FRED: I am sorry for your cold, but I was referring rather to your personal
45 appearance. Compared with other women, are you beautiful?
RUTH *(bashfully)*: I have been told so, dear master.
FRED: Ah, but lately?
RUTH: Oh, no, years and years ago.
FRED: What do you think of yourself?
50 RUTH: It is a delicate question to answer, but I think I am a fine woman.
FRED: That is your candid opinion?
RUTH: Yes, I should be deceiving you if I told you otherwise.
FRED: Thank you, Ruth, I believe you, for I am sure you would not practise on
my inexperience; I wish to do the right thing, and if—I say *if*—you are really a
55 fine woman, your age shall be no obstacle to our union! *(Chorus of Girls
heard in the distance.)* Hark! Surely I hear voices! Who has ventured to
approach our all but inaccessible lair? Can it be Custom House?² No, it does
not sound like Custom House.
RUTH *(aside)*: Confusion! it is the voices of young girls! If he should see them
60 I am lost.
FRED *(looking off)*: By all that's marvellous, a bevy of beautiful maidens!

Continued

²Custom House—officers from Customs and Excise, a government office that collects import duties

RUTH (*aside*): Lost! lost! lost!

65 FRED: How lovely! how surpassingly lovely is the plainest of them! What grace—what delicacy—what refinement! And Ruth—Ruth told me she was beautiful!

W. S. Gilbert (1836–1911)

D'OYLY CARTE'S OPERA COMPANY.



A poster designed for the D'Oyly Carte touring company in the early 1880s.